



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION

SUMMARY OF ALABAMA CRAB LAWS AND REGULATIONS

LICENSES:

(Expire September 30th)

Commercial Crab License.....\$51.00
Recreational Crab.....No License Required
(5 traps maximum)

Non-residents pay the same fee as that charged Alabama residents to conduct the same activity in the applicant's state of residence, or not less than twice the amount of resident license).

Any person taking crabs for commercial purposes or using more than (5) crab traps must first obtain and have in possession a crab catchers" license.

Individuals can use up to, but not more than, five (5) crab traps for taking crabs for personal, noncommercial purposes without a license.

It is unlawful to take crabs from traps belonging to another without written authorization.

Each commercial crab trap shall be marked with at least one (1) buoy no smaller than six (6) inches in diameter. At least one-half (1/2) of the buoy shall be white.

It is unlawful to remove commercial crab traps from the water or remove crabs from commercial crab traps during the hours from sunset to one (1) hour before sunrise the following day.

It is unlawful to set or place a crab trap in any marked navigational channel or within 100 yards of any public boat launching ramp.

It is unlawful to set or place crab traps in any waters in the Mobile Delta north of Interstate Highway 10 and/or State Highway 90 Battleship Parkway.

Crab traps shall not exceed twenty-seven (27) cubic feet in volume.

It is unlawful to sell for commercial purposes blue crabs that measure less than five (5) inches in width as measured across the widest points of the upper shell. Provided, however, this limitation does not apply to soft-shelled crabs or crabs sold for use as bait (Persons in possession of crabs to be sold for use as bait must be licensed as a live bait shrimp dealer).

CHANGES IN ALABAMA BLUE CRAB REGULATION

Alabama Marine Resources Division Director R. Vernon Minton announces the following revisions to existing Alabama blue crab regulations are effective **April 30, 1999**. These revisions, contained in Regulation 98-MR-18, are the result of two years of cooperative work with the Alabama Seafood Association and commercial crab fishermen. If you have any questions, please contact Major Jerry Waller at the Marine Resources Division's (MRD) Dauphin Island office, (861-2882), or if you want a copy of Regulation 98-MR-18, please contact the MRD office at Dauphin Island (861-2882) or Gulf Shores (968-7576).

The changes provide:

Possession of crabs of less than 5" carapace width is prohibited with the following exceptions:

- ◇ Exemptions from legal harvestable size (minimum 5" carapace width) and handling procedures for soft-shelled and pre-molt crabs, if taken solely for the purpose of shedding and held in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- ◇ Exemption for licensed live bait dealers from minimum size limits when crabs are sold for bait.

Maximum of two work boxes to sort crabs allowed per commercial crab fisherman's vessel with crabs in the work boxes exempt from the minimum size requirement while aboard the vessel.

All containers of Alabama crabs in possession of commercial crab fishermen or processors must be tagged, marked, or otherwise identified with the catcher's full name, identification number, and date harvested.

Possession limits for licensed commercial shrimp fishermen (one 5-gallon container of legal size crabs) and licensed recreational shrimp fishermen (one 1-gallon container of legal size crabs).

Identification requirements for imported crabs (identified as required by regulations in that state). Marking of commercial crab traps by identification number or color (identification number is assigned to fishermen by MRD and remains the same for subsequent years and/or fisherman may register color code design with MRD).

Prohibition on crab traps in man-made canals, navigational waterways, or within 300 feet of public boat ramps or named waters. Elimination of commercial crab traps and restrictions on recreational crab traps in named rivers, streams and bayous.

Marking of recreational crab traps with an orange float not less than 6" in diameter or width and a legible letter "R" at least 2" high permanently affixed to the float.

Possession of all valid applicable commercial licenses required to catch, sell, transport, or possess crabs.

Commercial crab fisherman must obtain the required identification number from the MRD office at Dauphin Island or Gulf Shores. Color code designs must be registered at one of these offices.

To register a color code design, fishermen must bring with them a float marked with their selected color design.